

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for selecting a conversation logic at run-time for a workflow
5 definition that includes at least one node with no hard-coded conversation
logic, the method comprising the steps of:

a) maintaining a conversation logic repository that includes at least one
conversation logic that is external to the workflow definition;

b) when executing the node with no hard-coded conversation logic, dynamically
10 discovering a service associated with the node with no hard-coded conversation logic;

c) determining a corresponding conversation logic in the conversation logic
repository based the discovered service; and

d) dynamically plugging in the determined conversation logic into the node at
run time.

15 2. The method of claim 1

wherein the step of when executing the node with no hard-coded
conversation logic, dynamically discovering a service associated with the node
with no hard-coded conversation logic includes the steps of:

20 determining a service based on a service selection rule;

receiving a service reference; and

wherein the step of determining a corresponding conversation logic in
the conversation logic repository based the discovered service further includes
the steps of

25 using the service reference to determine a conversation logic for the determined
service.

3. A method for selecting a conversation logic at run-time comprising the steps of:

maintaining a conversation logic repository that includes at least one

5 conversation logic;

at run-time, sending a service selection query to an electronic services platform or other service broker;

receiving a returned service identifier or reference; and

10 selecting a conversation logic from the repository of conversation logics based on a returned service identifier.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein each conversation logic is associated with at least one service.

15 5. The method of claim 3 wherein the conversation logic is for the exclusive use of a given composite service.

6. The method of claim 3 wherein the conversation logics is shared by two or more composite services.

20

7. The method of claim 3 wherein the conversation logic is not defined in the workflow at process definition time.

8. The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of:

25 interacting with a dynamic service discovery mechanism; and dynamically discovering services.

9. The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of:
performing late binding of the conversation logic at run-time.

10. The method of claim 3 wherein the repository is one of a single central database
5 and multiple distributed files.

11. A system for dynamically selecting a conversation logic at run-time for
a workflow definition that includes at least one node with no hard-coded
conversation logic comprising:

- 10 a) a workflow engine for processing workflow definitions;
- b) a conversation logic repository that includes at least one conversation logic
and that is external to the workflow definition;
- c) a dynamic conversation logic selection mechanism for receiving a service
identifier that is associated with a service at run-time and based thereon for selecting a
15 conversation logic for interacting with the service at run-time.

12. The system of claim 11 further comprising:

- d) a source for services; wherein the source discovers services based on a service
selection rule;
- 20 wherein the dynamic conversation logic selection mechanism (DCLSM) selects
appropriate conversation logic from the conversation logic repository based on a
discovered service.

13. The system of claim 11 wherein the source for services is one of a
25 service broker, a service marketplace, an e-services platform, a company, and
an entity.

-28-

14. The system of claim 11, wherein only services that have a conversation protocol compatible with one of the conversation logics available in the repository are selected.

5 15. The system of claim 11 wherein each conversation logic is associated with at least one service.

16. The system of claim 11 wherein the conversation logic is for the exclusive use of a given composite service.

10

17. The system of claim 11 wherein the conversation logics is shared by two or more composite services.

15

18. The system of claim 11 wherein the conversation logic is not defined in the workflow at process definition time.

19. The system of claim 11 wherein the dynamic conversation logic selection mechanism performs late binding of the conversation logic at run-time.

20 20. The system of claim 11 wherein the conversation logic repository is one of a single central database and multiple distributed files.